

Motivational Dynamics and Benefits of Informal Chinese Learning Among Japanese Adult Learners

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Abstract: *Abstract: This study investigates the motivational factors driving Japanese learners to learn Chinese in informal group settings in Tokyo, and examines the benefits of group learning. Recognizing the complexity and individual variability of language learning motivation, the research addresses a gap in understanding Chinese learning for adults in informal contexts. Using a mixed-method design, the study collected demographic data from 64 learners through a quantitative questionnaire, followed by qualitative interviews to delve deeper into motivational factors and changes over time. Key findings indicate that integrative and instrumental motivations equally initiate adult learners' language learning. Informal group learning, providing opportunities for communication, interaction, and mutual encouragement, is particularly crucial for maintaining motivation, especially among retirees for whom it serves as a social outlet. Additional factors like teachers, learning materials, and the learning environment also significantly sustain motivation by creating a positive learning experience. Participants reported a sense of fulfillment and enjoyment from regular study, progress, and group interaction. The study suggests that informal group settings can complement formal education for adult learners, particularly satisfying the learning and social needs of retirees. The findings offer insights for policymakers and communities on establishing informal learning spaces to support adult and elderly populations' education.*

Key Words: *motivation; Chinese learning; group learning*

Introduction

This study focuses on Mandarin Chinese language learning among Japanese adults aged over 40 in informal group settings in Tokyo. It highlights the increasing global interest in learning Chinese due to China's economic growth and cultural influence. Despite this interest, there is limited research on motivation in informal learning contexts, particularly for older adult learners.

Motivation is a crucial factor in language learning, influencing learners' attitudes, efforts, and outcomes. While extensive research exists on motivation in formal education settings, few studies explore motivation in informal group settings. This study aims to address this gap by investigating the motivational factors driving Japanese adults to learn Chinese in informal settings.

Understanding these motivational factors is important for educators, learners, and organizers to create effective language learning environments that sustain motivation, especially among older learners. By exploring these factors, the study seeks to contribute insights to facilitate lifelong language learning among adult learners in diverse contexts.

Purpose of Statement

The aim of this research is to investigate the factors that drive Japanese learners, particularly those aged over 40, to study Chinese in informal group settings in Tokyo. Additionally, it seeks to understand the potential benefits these learners gain from group learning experiences. The findings aim to provide valuable insights for organizers and educators looking to establish informal learning spaces that cater to the educational and social needs of adult learners, particularly the growing elderly population. The study also suggests that informal group settings for language learning could serve as a supplementary educational option for adults engaging in lifelong learning, addressing both the learning and social needs of retirees.

Previous Study

Extensive scholarly investigation by researchers such as Gardner (1985), Dörnyei (1994), Oxford & Shearin (1996), and Ngeow, Karen, and Yeok-Hwa (1998) underscores the pivotal role of motivation in shaping learners' attitudes, efforts, and ultimately, their educational outcomes. Dörnyei (1998) emphasizes the significant impact of motivation on the speed and success of second language (L2) acquisition, a view widely recognized by educators and scholars. Research has sought to delineate the concept of motivation, as seen in Gardner's (1985) differentiation between integrative and instrumental motivations, and to develop methodologies for its measurement, such as the concept of "motivational intensity" introduced by Masgoret and Gardner (2001), which correlates with sustained effort and academic success in foreign language environments. Investigations have also explored the interplay between affective factors and motivation in foreign language acquisition (e.g., Noels, Clément & Pelletier, 1999; Yan, 1998). Despite the extensive body of research in this area, there remains a paucity of studies examining the relationship

between motivation among adult learners and contextual variables, such as informal group dynamics.

Moreover, considerable scholarly attention has been directed towards elucidating motivational aspects within formal educational settings. Researchers such as Wen (1997) and Yang (2003) have explored the motivations driving individuals to acquire proficiency in Chinese as a second or foreign language within university environments. Yang's (2003) inquiry illuminated the predominance of integrative elements in shaping language motivation among East Asian language learners, surpassing the influence of instrumental factors. Similarly, investigations by Comanaru and Noels (2009) and Ruan, Duan, and Du (2015) have examined motivational determinants inherent in the process of acquiring proficiency in Chinese as a foreign language within task-based pedagogical frameworks in university settings, suggesting that active engagement and the educational milieu itself can invigorate learners' intrinsic motivation to persist in their linguistic endeavors. Nevertheless, there is a conspicuous lack of research focusing on adult learners' acquisition of Chinese within informal learning settings in Japan. The complex nature of adult learners' pursuit of proficiency in Chinese presents methodological challenges for researchers, particularly in accommodating variances in learner demographics and learning contexts. Addressing this gap, the present study endeavors to scrutinize the motivational factors driving adult Japanese learners, particularly older individuals, engaged in informal group Chinese language acquisition within a Japanese context.

Research Questions

Given the intricacies in the process of acquiring proficiency in a foreign language and the unique attributes of individual learners across various learning environments, it is imperative to investigate diverse learner populations within different educational settings. While some studies have examined Chinese language acquisition within formal educational frameworks, there remains a dearth of research delineating the multifaceted motivational factors characterizing distinct learning contexts in Japan. Thus, to bridge this research gap, the current study explores the motivational dynamics of adult Japanese learners, primarily those aged over 40, engaged in informal group Chinese language learning. The research endeavors to elucidate the benefits of group learning in facilitating Chinese language acquisition among learners. To this end, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. What motivates adult Japanese learners to pursue Chinese language acquisition within informal group settings in Tokyo?

2. How do learners derive benefits from participating in Chinese language learning within informal group settings in Tokyo?

- 2.1. What specific advantages do learners experience from engaging in group-based Chinese language learning?

- 2.2. Apart from acquiring proficiency in Chinese, what additional benefits do learners derive from group-based learning?

2.3. Does the process of learning Chinese and engaging in communication activities lead to any transformative changes in learners' lives and their perceptions of China or the Chinese people?

Significance of Research

The significance of the research lies in its contribution to understanding motivation in diverse learning contexts and addressing the challenges associated with sustaining learning motivation. Despite extensive research on motivation in language learning, few studies have focused on the interaction between adult learner motivation and informal group settings, particularly in Japan. The study fills this gap by investigating the motivations of adult Japanese learners, especially older individuals, in informal group settings for Chinese language learning.

By examining the factors that keep adult learners motivated in informal group settings, the study aims to provide insights for teachers, learners, and organizers to facilitate lifelong language learning. The research questions focus on understanding why adult Japanese learners are motivated to learn Chinese in informal group settings and how they benefit from such group learning experiences, including potential changes in their perceptions of China and Chinese culture through language acquisition and communication.

Limitations

The limitations of this study primarily stem from challenges encountered during data collection and the intricate nature of motivation among Japanese adult learners engaged in language acquisition. Firstly, the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 led to a significant decrease in the number of learners in the classroom, as some preferred in-person communication over online classes. Consequently, the limited participants may hinder the generalizability of the study's findings. Additionally, the online administration of questionnaires resulted in some participants missing questions, highlighting the potential benefits of face-to-face distribution and collection by the author, as originally planned. Concerns also arise regarding the comfort level of participants during online interviews, as technical issues such as internet connectivity and response delays may impede open communication. Furthermore, the diverse motivations driving individual adult learners to study Chinese in various contexts suggest that the study's findings may not be universally applicable due to the complex interplay of learner characteristics, learning environments, and the nature of the language itself.

Literature Review

Motivation of Foreign Language Learning

Motivation has long been a focal point of research and theoretical exploration within the domain of foreign language acquisition. Scholars have underscored its pivotal role in determining language learners' perseverance, effort, and ultimately, their outcome (Ellis,

1997). Rogers and Horrocks (2010) define motivation in learning as the driving force that sustains individuals within educational environments and propels them toward learning endeavors. Researchers have sought to identify the key factors influencing students' motivation to learn a foreign language and to elucidate strategies through which educators can enhance motivation. Several models of language learner motivation have been developed and posited.

Gardner's Socio-Educational Model delineates two motivational orientations: integrative and instrumental. Integrative motivation stems from a genuine interest in learning the language to foster connections with the target language community, while instrumental motivation is driven by practical considerations such as career advancement (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner, 1985). Early research suggested that integrative motivation tends to correlate more strongly with language learning achievements (Finegan, 1999).

Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory identifies intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as two key motivational components. Intrinsic motivation arises from the inherent enjoyment derived from engaging in an activity, while extrinsic motivation is driven by external rewards or consequences (Deci & Ryan, 1985). They argue that interpersonal structures, such as communication and feedback during learning activities, can bolster intrinsic motivation by fulfilling psychological needs for competence.

While conventional views of motivation in second language acquisition have been critiqued for their oversimplification, recent research emphasizes the multifaceted and dynamic nature of motivation. Dörnyei's (1990) framework delineates three sets of motivational components: course-specific, teacher-specific, and group-specific. Crookes and Schmidt (1991) identified four motivation determinants: interest, relevance, expectancy, and reward. Ho (1998) posits that motivation is influenced by multiple factors rather than a singular element.

These various motivational components are relevant to the present study, as they may influence sustained motivation and efforts among adult learners, particularly those over 40 years old, engaged in foreign language acquisition.

Motivation for Learning Chinese as a Foreign Language

Regarding motivation for learning Chinese as a foreign language, Gardner's Socio-Educational Model and Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory have primarily compared integrative and instrumental motivation. Integrative or intrinsic motivation entails a genuine interest in the language for the purpose of connecting with the target language community, while instrumental or extrinsic motivation revolves around practical considerations such as career advancement. Both models suggest that integrative or intrinsic motivation is more closely linked to language learning achievement (Gardner, 1985; Gardner, Tremblay & Masgoret, 1997).

However, various studies have indicated diverse motivations for learning Chinese among different learner populations. Wen (1997) explored motivational factors among students of Asian heritage learning Chinese at American universities, highlighting cultural

interest as a key motivating factor. Yang (2003) found that integrative elements were more influential than instrumental factors among East Asian language learners. Noels (2000, 2001) applied Self-Determination Theory to understand motivation and attitudes toward Chinese language learning in a multicultural educational context, concluding that meaningful and enjoyable learning experiences enhance engagement. Sun (2011) identified a range of motivations for learning Chinese among Canadian university students, including travel, cultural interest, communication with Chinese people, and job opportunities.

Adult Learners in Foreign Language Learning

In this study, "adult learners" refers to individuals who have completed formal schooling and pursue learning for professional, social, or personal reasons. Age significantly impacts foreign language learning, with research showing varying effects on language acquisition.

•**Cognitive Advantages:** Some researchers argue that adults' higher cognitive levels, self-control, and logical thinking help them learn languages effectively (Wang, 2009). Krashen (1982) noted that adults could learn faster than children given the same learning time.

•**Challenges:** Conversely, Krashen (1982) also highlighted that post-puberty, language acquisition becomes harder, relying more on conscious learning and effort. Adults' multifaceted identities and responsibilities necessitate strong learning motivation and a supportive, anxiety-free environment to facilitate learning.

In this study, Japanese learners aged 30 to 80 (mainly over 40) were examined. With Japan's aging population, where 41.24% are over 55, there is an increasing need for lifelong learning models. Learning foreign languages is beneficial as it stimulates brain plasticity, enhances social interaction, and contributes to a healthy, active lifestyle, promoting positive aging (Antoniou, Gunasekera, and Wong, 2013).

Group Dynamics of Learning Chinese in Informal Group Settings

In this study, adult Japanese learners study Chinese in informal groups during the evenings, with each group consisting of 2 to 10 members. One or two volunteer leaders manage group activities, such as attendance, welcoming new members, supporting the teacher, and organizing social events like drinking parties.

•**Group Cohesion:** Previous research by Clement (1980) and Dörnyei & Noels (1990) has highlighted the importance of group cohesion in foreign language learning motivation. Group dynamics, including structure, norms, interaction patterns, and cohesion, significantly influence learning outcomes.

•**Group Dynamics:** Lewin (1947) introduced the concept of group dynamics, explaining that individual behaviors and personalities are influenced by group interactions. Dörnyei (1994) identified four key aspects of group dynamics in language learning: goal-orientedness, norms and rewards, group cohesion, and classroom goal structures.

•**Positive Effects of Cohesion:** Group cohesion strengthens relationships among members, positively influencing group performance (Evans and Dion, 1991). Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels (1994) found that group cohesion enhances self-confidence, motivation, and language learning outcomes.

•**Collaborative Efforts:** Johnson et al. (1995) emphasized the importance of individuals supporting each other to achieve group goals, fostering a sense of interdependence.

In this study, the regular interaction and collaboration in these informal groups, led by native Chinese teachers, have gradually formed strong group dynamics and cohesion. This environment encourages members to work together and support each other's learning, contributing to the overall success of the group.

Methodology

Research Methods

The study employs both quantitative and qualitative research methods, addressing two key research questions concerning the motivation and benefits of adult Japanese learners studying Chinese in informal group settings in Tokyo.

For quantitative research, data collection is conducted via a questionnaire administered in Japanese through Google Survey. The questionnaire (Appendix A) consists of 17 items, measuring motivation variables and demographic information. Descriptive statistics are computed to identify skewed items, followed by data analysis to select participants for further interviews. Qualitative data is gathered through interviews (Appendix B) to explore the benefits of Chinese learning in informal group settings. Participants are selected based on their experiences and age groups, ensuring a diverse sample.

Participants and the Learning Place

The study involves Japanese learners at Lecochoi (name of the learning place, meaning happy and rich learning), an informal group setting in Tokyo, with a focus on learners aged 30 to 80. Classes, primarily conducted in the evenings and on Saturdays, cater to varying proficiency levels and offer a range of language skills classes. Due to COVID-19, classes briefly transitioned online, resulting in a limited response to the questionnaire and necessitating online interview.

Based on questionnaire data, the researcher selected five participants who preferred group Chinese learning. To facilitate comparisons between individuals with and without experience in China or frequent communication with Chinese individuals, the researcher chose two participants with prior extensive China experience, one with limited residency but frequent communication, and two with no China experience. Participants' ages ranged from 40s to 80s, ensuring representation across various age groups.

Data Collection Procedures

The recruitment process for the study participants involved several steps. Firstly, the researcher secured support from the organizer and Chinese teachers at the learning center.

With their permission, the researcher emailed potential participants, providing a consent form and requesting their cooperation. Those willing to join the study signed the consent form and completed a Google survey questionnaire (Appendix A). Participants remained anonymous to ensure comfort in providing authentic responses, but those interested in interviews left their email addresses. Based on the questionnaire data, five participants were selected for further interviews. The researcher sent the interview questions (Appendix B) in Japanese at least two days before the interview, which lasted 30-40 minutes, with one extending to 50 minutes. Participants could respond in either Chinese or Japanese, and the interviews were recorded with consent and later transcribed into English for analysis. All study materials, including consent forms, questionnaires, and interview questions, were conducted in Japanese to ensure clarity for the Japanese learners involved.

Results and Discussion

Quantitative Data

The study conducted a survey via Google, receiving 64 responses, to explore the motivational factors for adult Japanese learners studying Chinese in informal group settings in Tokyo. Key demographic findings revealed that 87.5% of participants had been learning Chinese for over three years, with 67.2% learning for more than five years. Most participants were male (56.5%), over 40 years old (82.9%), and held at least a bachelor's degree (82.3%).

Motivational factors included both integrative (interest) and instrumental (job-related) reasons. The primary reason for learning Chinese was interest (60.9%), followed by job requirements (37.5%). Group learning was preferred by 81.3% of respondents due to the collective progress and diverse responses it offered.

All participants expressed a desire to continue learning Chinese, and 84.1% were interested in learning other languages as well. Social activities were important, with 58.7% enjoying drinking parties and 46% enjoying travel, though preferences varied widely. Satisfaction with teachers was high (100% positive), and most were satisfied with learning materials (76.6%) and the learning environment (86%). Communication with other group members was also positively rated (81.2%), though some were less satisfied. Participation in activities organized by the learning place showed mixed results, with 68.2% enjoying them but notable dissatisfaction among others.

Overall, the study highlights the significant role of both integrative and instrumental motivations in adult language learning, the benefits of group learning, and the importance of a supportive learning environment and social activities.

Qualitative Data

To further understand the factors influencing learners' motivation for learning Chinese, interviews with six open-ended questions were conducted. Five participants were selected from those who volunteered their email addresses in the questionnaire, indicating willingness to participate in further interviews. These participants were chosen based on

different age ranges, a preference for group learning, and having attended classes at Lecochai for over two years. None of them used Chinese in their current jobs, and one was retired.

Participant Profiles

•Participant A (40s): male, intermediate to advanced level in Chinese

His interest in Chinese began during university, motivated by its potential future utility. He lived and worked in China for nearly three years before returning to Japan. For over six years, he has been studying at Lecochai, currently attending advanced grammar and speaking classes. Additionally, he has been taking English speaking classes since 2020. Highly motivated, he regularly helps with after-class activities. He attends both Chinese and English classes weekly, although his work sometimes requires him to miss sessions. He prefers group learning due to its affordability, social aspects, and the motivation he gains from interacting with other learners, particularly retired individuals.

•Participant B (50s): male, an intermediate level of Chinese

His journey began with a three-month company training program, followed by a year of self-study, which he found challenging. He discovered Lecochai online and has been attending classes there for six years. Though he doesn't use Chinese at work, he studies Chinese one hour before bed on weekdays. He enjoys group learning for the interaction and the diverse perspectives of other Japanese learners.

•Participant C (50s): male, advanced level of Chinese.

He started learning when his company sent him to China. After a break upon returning to Japan, he resumed studying and has been with Lecochai for over three years. He attends speaking and grammar classes, volunteers as a tour guide in Chinese, and is involved in the Tokyo Olympic Games. He studies Chinese regularly and prefers social activities over sports. Group learning appeals to him for its lower cost and the opportunity to communicate with others.

•Participant D (60s): male, intermediate level of Chinese

His interest stemmed from business trips to China and a curiosity about the culture and people. He initially learned through Chinese radio and online tutors, attending a language school before joining Lecochai four years ago. He is active in social activities and values group learning for its social interaction and friendship opportunities.

•Participant E (80s): male, intermediate to advanced level in Chinese

Born in China during the second World War, he did not learn Chinese when he was in China as his education was all conducted in Japanese. He came back to Japan when he was eight years old. His interest was rekindled at age 14 by a Chinese poem in a textbook. After retiring, he continued learning Chinese and has been with Lecochai for over 12 years. He also studies English and Korean. Due to his age, he prefers cooking activities over drinking parties and sports. Group learning provides his main social circle after retirement.

Discussion of the Results to Research Question One

What motivates adult Japanese learners to pursue Chinese language acquisition within informal group settings in Tokyo?

•Integrative Factors:

Interest and Communication:

The results show that 60.9% of participants cited interest as their primary motivation. Comment examples translated from Japanese from interviews:

Participant A: Choose Chinese as a second language in university due to interest and its future utility. *“Originally, I studied Chinese because I used to major in international relations in university. I had to choose a second foreign language in college and I was interested in Chinese more and thought it might be useful in the future, so I chose to learn Chinese.”*

Participant D: Aimed to communicate with Chinese people and learn about Chinese culture.

“I began to learn Chinese because I want to communicate with Chinese people and know more about Chinese people and Chinese culture. I used to have business trips to China, but I did not need to speak Chinese because I have an interpreter.”

Participant E: Inspired by a Chinese poem in middle school, linked to his heritage.

“I began to learn Chinese when I was in third grade in middle school. I was born in Manchuria. When Japan failed the war and people came back to Japan, and then I went to primary and middle school in Japan. When I was in the third grade in middle school, I learned a Chinese poem, and that’s when I realized that I was born in China. But that was the first time that I began to get interested in Chinese.”

•Instrumental Factors:

Job-Related Reasons: the second most common motivation in the questionnaire.

Comment examples from interviews:

Participant B: Learned Chinese for work during a stint in China.

“I went to China ten years ago and worked there for some time.”

Participant C: Started learning Chinese due to a company training program.

“I first learned Chinese in 2011, and there was a Chinese training class and I have learned Chinese for three months and only learned basics like pronunciation.”

•Other Motivational Factors:

Teachers:

Participants highly valued responsible and enthusiastic teachers. There is plenty of positive feedback on teacher dedication and preparation. Specific teaching methods, such as correcting pronunciation, were appreciated.

Comment translated from Japanese are :

Participant A:

“The teachers are all good and most of them are international graduate students, very hard working.” Participant Participant B:

“The teachers in Lecochoi are very responsible. Even though most of them are not professional, they are passionate and enthusiastic in teaching Chinese and they prepare the class very well.”

Participant C:

“I like teachers who are responsible for teaching. For the conversation class, I like the teacher who listens to us carefully and corrects us in pronunciation and expression ways. I like this kind of teaching method. “

Participant D:

“ Many of us who take Ms. Z ‘s class on Wednesdays do a lot of preparation, and many of them study hard. In that sense, I think Ms Z’s class on Wednesdays is good. The content of the class is a good match with what they (learners) are looking for. But there are people who want to study in a relaxed atmosphere instead of using textbooks and studying hard. If you can choose a class that suits your way of thinking, you will be able to last longer. So I think it’s very important to make sure that the atmosphere of the class and the content of the class match what each individual needs. In terms of expanding the variety of classes, I think it’s better to have a variety of teachers. I mean that there are many variations of classes at Lecochai. There are different levels, different class atmospheres, and different purposes, so I think students should choose the one that suits them best.”

Participant E:

“I like the teacher. I got used to the speaking speed of the teacher even though I could not catch it at the very beginning. I hope the teacher could explain in detail when it comes to the things I do not understand.”

Learning Materials:

There is mixed feedback on learning materials; some preferred more current content while the majority of participants are satisfied with textbooks, though updates were desired. Comment translated from Japanese:

“The textbook is ok, but it is old and I like the textbook with the recent topic.”

Learning Environment:

Convenient location and visibility on the internet has been mentioned by participants with general satisfaction with the learning space, though space limitations were noted. Comment examples translated from Japanese:

“Lecochai’s website looks good. It comes up on the top of the most searches. Nobody has introduced it to me, but I found and accessed it by myself.”

In conclusion, in this study, according to the data acquired both from questionnaire and interview, both integrative and instrumental motivations drive learners to engage in Chinese learning, which also transforms over time. Teachers, learning materials, and the learning environment are critical in sustaining motivation. Learners’ needs and preferences vary, highlighting the importance of tailored learning experiences. Integrative and instrumental motivations are not mutually exclusive and can evolve during the learning process.

Discussion of the Results to Research Question Two

2. How do learners derive benefits from participating in Chinese language learning within group settings in Tokyo?

2.1. What specific advantages do learners experience from engaging in group-based Chinese language learning?

2.2. Apart from acquiring proficiency in Chinese, what additional benefits do learners derive from group-based learning?

2.3. Does the process of learning Chinese and engaging in communication activities lead to any transformative changes in learners' lives and their perceptions of China or the Chinese people?

All participants are highly satisfied with group learning, enjoying various benefits that meet their learning and social needs. They all showed strong motivation to continue learning Chinese and benefited significantly from group learning, as it allows them to:

•Hear different ideas and answers.

"I know more people with different careers."

"Different answers can be heard from others."

•Gain encouragement and inspiration from other members.

"It is fun and motivating to learn with others."

"Group learning helps maintain motivation."

"Learning in a group I got motivated from what other group members learned. The members in my group, their (Chinese) level is high, which motivated me, therefore, I also feel like working hard."

Also, I admire and respect Mr Q and Mr Z in our learning group. Even though they began to learn Chinese after retirement, they are studying hard. Since I am very lazy, having people like them in the learning group will encourage me to keep learning."

•Interact and make friends with people from diverse backgrounds.

There is a lot of communication with other group members.

"There are different kinds of people in Lecochai, they are doing different jobs, there are employees, there are also employers, it is interesting and fun to communicate with others."

"I'm looking for a place to study, but I also want to interact with people of various ages and professions. I think it's okay for people to do that. Some people don't attend classes, they just attend activities. There are many people you wouldn't be able to get to know within the scope of your own work or company. So I think it's a great place to get to know people you wouldn't normally get to know."

"There are people like me who are looking for friends. I think there are more people (in Lecochai) who are looking for friends."

•Economically share tuition fees.

"Group learning is cheaper, compared with one-on-one tutoring."

•Make progress in Chinese and learn more about China and its people.

"Our Chinese level is about the same and I feel happy to learn with them and we can learn from each other to improve Chinese. Also, I can make friends with those who are dedicated to learning Chinese."

"I think group learning is good because when I study with classmates in the group, they could inspire me to learn more. Besides, I could refer to others' answers when they

answered the questions. I think Japanese and Chinese think differently, for example, they make sentences differently. So it is easier to understand other Japanese classmates' answers."

•Become more open-minded through diverse communication and learning experiences.

"I think it's interesting to interact with people in person, experiencing the same sense of realism, drinking and eating together, human interaction, not necessarily for different jobs, but human interaction with different people. They may work in different places and do different kinds of work, and it's interesting just to know that. There are women, too, regardless of whether they are male or female, and they happen to be studying Chinese together, and that's interesting, too."

Furthermore, their lives have become richer through regular learning, and they enjoy a sense of achievement and fulfillment as their Chinese improves.

In short, motivation for Chinese learning is dynamic and complex. For adult learners, especially older adults in this study, the motivation combines various orientations, and integrative and instrumental motivations can transform during the learning process. A pleasant learning experience, supported by satisfactory teachers, materials, methods, and environments that meet learners' needs, is essential to sustain their motivation in continuing to learn Chinese.

Conclusion

Findings

Motivation is a critical factor in foreign language learning, influencing both learning outcomes and achievements. It is a dynamic and complex psychological process, affected by integrative (cultural interest) and instrumental (job-related) orientations, as well as factors like teachers, learning materials, and the learning environment. This study focuses on adult Japanese learners of Chinese in informal group settings in Tokyo, exploring how motivations evolve over time.

•Initial Motivations:

- Integrative Orientation: Cultural interest and the desire to communicate with people from the target language group.
- Instrumental Orientation: Job-related benefits, such as better career prospects and higher salaries
- Overlap of Motivations: Learners often have a combination of integrative and instrumental motivations that can shift over time depending on circumstances.

• Sustained Motivations:

- Over time, the initial job-related (instrumental) motivations tend to diminish, especially for retired learners.
- Intrinsic Motivations: Become more prominent, driven by enjoyment of the language, cultural interest, and social interaction within learning groups.

• Group Learning Dynamics:

- Learning in informal groups fosters a sense of community and social interaction, enhancing intrinsic motivation.
- Group Cohesion: Regular interaction and support within groups lead to a strong sense of belonging, encouraging sustained effort in language learning.
- Social Activities: Activities like drinking parties, traveling, cooking, and watching events together further strengthen group bonds and motivation.
- **Impact of Learning Environment:**
 - Teachers and Materials: Specific requirements and satisfaction with teachers and learning materials play a significant role. There is a need for varied and updated learning content to meet the diverse needs of adult learners.
 - Pleasant Learning Environment: A positive and interactive learning environment enhances motivation and enjoyment.
- **Additional Benefits:**
 - Lifelong Learning: Learning Chinese contributes to lifelong learning, enriching learners' lives both physically and mentally.
 - Healthy Aging: Continued learning and social interaction promote healthy aging and a sense of achievement.

Implications

- **For Educational Stakeholders:** Offer more educational opportunities for adult learners to promote active aging and lifelong learning. Provide resources and communication opportunities to sustain motivation.
- **For Learners:** Encourage autonomy and active engagement with teachers and learning materials. Develop strategies to overcome challenges and adjust learning goals.
- **For Teachers:** Understand and cater to the diverse motivations and needs of learners, especially older adults. Create an inclusive learning environment that balances different learning paces and preferences.

Foreign language learning motivation is dynamic and multifaceted, combining integrative and instrumental orientations. Informal group settings play a significant role in sustaining motivation, contributing to both personal development and lifelong learning, especially for older adults. This study highlights the importance of tailored educational programs and supportive learning environments to enhance motivation and promote successful language acquisition.

Appendix A Questionnaire

Following are a series of questions concerning your Chinese learning. Please answer questions from 1-10, by circling (o) the alphabet that most closely matches your response or write down your own answers. From question 11-15, please circle the number that most closely matches your response (strongly agree = 5, agree = 4, neutral = 3, disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1. don't know = 0) Thank you for your time and cooperation.

16. Which age range are you in ?

A. <30 B. 30-40 C. 40-50 D. 50-60 E. 60-70 F. 70-80 E. over 10 years G. >80

17. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

A. primary school B. secondary school C. high school D. university degree E. Master degree F. Doctor's degree

Appendix B

Interview Questions

1. Would you like to briefly talk about your Chinese learning experience?

2. Have you studied Chinese in other places and why do you choose group learning in Lecochai?

3. For these aspects, teachers, learning materials, group learning method, could you talk more details about what you like or dislike?

4. Have you attended the activities organized by Lecochai? If yes, did you enjoy it? If not, do you want to attend?

5. Did you have a good time learning Chinese in group learning in Lecochai? Do you like the people there or have you made friends there?

6. Do you think differently of China after learning Chinese with Chinese teachers in Japan? And how has your life changed after learning Chinese?

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